

Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity

PART I: OVERVIEW

Federal Agency Name: Corporation for National and Community Service
Funding Opportunity Title: AmeriCorps State and National Planning Grants FY2012
Announcement Type: Amended announcement. Initially issued 8.29.11
CFDA Number: 94.006

Dates: Applications are due **January 18, 2012** at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Successful applicants will be notified by mid-April, 2012.

The mission of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic participation through service and volunteering. For more than fifteen years, CNCS—through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs—has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action.

On April 21, 2009, President Obama signed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, the most sweeping expansion of national service in a generation. This landmark law not only expands service opportunities, but also focuses national service on key outcomes; builds the capacity of individuals, nonprofits, and communities to succeed; and encourages innovative approaches to solving problems.

In alignment with the Serve America Act, this AmeriCorps State and National (AmeriCorps) *Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity* will focus AmeriCorps grantmaking in the Veterans and Military Families Focus Area.

In order to carry out Congress' intent and to maximize the impact of the investment in national service, CNCS is seeking to fund programs that can demonstrate community impact and solve community problems through an evidence-based approach (e.g. performance data, research, theory of change).

In the AmeriCorps competition this year, CNCS especially seeks to prioritize investment in three areas of its work. CNCS will continue to focus on national service programs that improve academic outcomes for children, youth, and young adults. This focus reflects the extensive experience and past success of national service programs in education, and aligns with the efforts of the Department of Education. In addition, CNCS seeks to increase its investment in programs that serve veterans and military families or engage veterans in service. CNCS will also focus investment in programs that increase community resiliency through disaster preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation.

This [Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity \(Notice\)](#) should be read together with the [AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR Sections 2520 – 2550](#) and the [Application Instructions](#).

In accordance with the Obama Administration's emphasis on open government CNCS has moved toward greater openness and transparency in grantmaking. This *Notice* includes a description of the review and selection process in Section V.

The following information pertaining to this competition will be published on the [CNCS website](http://nationalservice.gov/about/open/grants.asp) at (<http://nationalservice.gov/about/open/grants.asp>), within a period not to exceed 90 business days after all grants are awarded:

- List of all compliant applications submitted.
- Executive summaries of all compliant applications prepared by the applicants as part of the application.
- Copies of the SF424 and Program Narrative submitted by applicants for successful applicants.

PART II: DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. What is the purpose of AmeriCorps Planning Grants?

The purpose of planning grants is to support the development of AmeriCorps programs that will engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based interventions to solve community problems. Planning grant recipients are expected to be better prepared to compete for an AmeriCorps program grant in the following grant cycle. Planning grants may not be used to support AmeriCorps members.

An AmeriCorps member is an individual who is enrolled in an approved national service position and engages in community service. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service members receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust.

The purpose of CNCS is to maximize the power of service and volunteering to improve lives in communities across the country. In the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, Congress directed CNCS to focus national service in areas where service can make a major impact, including education, energy conservation, health, economic opportunity for economically vulnerable individuals, increasing service by and for veterans, and providing disaster services.

CNCS is carrying out Congress's intent by targeting this AmeriCorps Planning Grant funding in the focus area of Veterans and Military Families. In accordance with the Act, through this *Notice* and its other activities, CNCS seeks to:

- Direct the power of national service to solve a common set of challenges.
- Expand opportunities for all Americans to serve.
- Build the enduring capacity of individuals, organizations and communities to effectively use service and volunteering to solve community problems.
- Embrace innovative solutions that work.

Veterans and Military Families Focus Area Description:

Grants will positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength. Grant activities will increase:

- the number of veterans and military service members and their families served by CNCS-supported programs, and
- the number of veterans and military family members engaged in service provision through CNCS-supported programs.

Encore Programs

Congress set a goal that 10 percent of AmeriCorps funding should support encore service programs. CNCS seeks to meet that 10 percent target in this competition and encourages programs that plan to engage a significant number of participants age 55 or older to apply.

B. What are the 2012 AmeriCorps planning grant funding priorities?

CNCS expects to invest the available funding to applicants proposing programming in the Focus Area of **Veterans and Military Families**.

To meet this goal, CNCS will give priority consideration to the following, in descending order of preference:

- **Tier 1:** Applicants proposing to address outcomes identified in the Veterans and Military Families Priority Measures.
- **Tier 2:** Applicants proposing to develop a program which will address outcomes identified in the Pilot Measures.
- **Tier 3:** Applicants proposing to address other outcomes in the Veterans and Military Families Focus Area.

A list of Priority and Pilot Measures can be found in **Section VIII**. below.

Applicants proposing programs that receive priority consideration are not guaranteed funding. CNCS will pursue a balanced portfolio across the Priorities, and other considerations outlined below in **Section V. B**. Furthermore, applicants must demonstrate significant program focus, design and impact to receive priority consideration. It will not be sufficient for an applicant to propose veterans and military family service as one of several aspects of the proposed program. While other services may be provided, the clear focus should be on veterans and/or military families.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. How much funding is available?

The actual level of funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations, which have not yet been made. CNCS estimates awarding a small number of grants. Applicants may apply for up to a maximum of \$50,000.

B. When will the grants be awarded?

CNCS will award grants following the grant selection announcement, contingent on appropriations. We anticipate announcing the results of this competition by mid-April, 2012.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Who is eligible to apply?

1. AmeriCorps State and National Planning Grants

Public or private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based and other community organizations; institutions of higher education; government entities within states or territories (e.g., cities, counties); Indian Tribes; labor organizations; partnerships and consortia; and intermediaries planning to subgrant funds awarded are encouraged to apply. Organizations that have been convicted of a Federal crime are disqualified from receiving the assistance described in this *Notice*.

Single-state planning applicants must not have previously received an AmeriCorps State grant. Multi-state planning applicants must not have previously received a multi-state AmeriCorps grant. Applicants may have received funding through Learn and Serve America, NCCC, Senior Corps, or VISTA.

B. What are the matching requirements for these grants?

Applicants must provide 24% of the total project cost in match. Match may be cash or in-kind. Indian Tribal Government programs are subject to the same matching requirements. However, in accordance with Executive Order 13175, "Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments," CNCS may expedite approving waivers of matching requirements. Tribal governments that require a waiver must submit a request at least 60 days before the AmeriCorps application is due. For full information on applying for a Tribal waiver, send a request for instructions to TribalMatchWaiver@cns.gov.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. How to Apply

Organizations that propose to operate an AmeriCorps program in one state only must contact the appropriate State Commission for application materials and must submit their application through that State Commission. Organizations that propose to operate in more than one state apply directly to CNCS. Indian Tribes may apply through State Commissions, or directly to CNCS if the Tribe plans to operate its program in more than one state.

A list of all State Commissions can be found here:

<http://www.americorps.gov/about/contact/statecommission.asp>.

Commissions do not currently exist in American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, South Dakota, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. We are not accepting planning grant applications from organizations operating solely within these locales.

B. Notice of Intent to Apply

Applicants are encouraged to send an e-mail by December 21, 2011 to americorpsgrants@cns.gov stating intent to apply.

Although submission of the Notice of Intent is not mandatory, submitting it will help CNCS plan more efficiently for review. Include the name of the applicant organization, address, contact person, and phone number in the Notice of Intent. State Commissions are encouraged to include an estimate of the number of programs planned for submission to the state planning competition. Providing an e-mail address will also allow CNCS to contact applicants directly if application materials are updated.

C. Universal Identifier

Applications must include a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and register with the Central Contractor's Registry (CCR). **The DUNS number does not replace an Employer Identification Number.**

DUNS numbers may be obtained at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. The website indicates a 24-hour e-mail turnaround time on requests for DUNS numbers; however, **we suggest registering at least 30 days in advance of the application due date.** Expedited DUNS numbers may be obtained by following instructions found here: <http://smallbusiness.dnb.com/establish-your-business/12334338-1.html>.

CCR is the primary registrant database for the U.S. Federal Government. CCR collects, validates, stores, and disseminates data in support of Federal agency contracts, grant awards, cooperative agreements, and other forms of federal assistance. All Corporation recipients are required to maintain a valid registration, which must be renewed annually.

We urge applicants that are not already registered with the CCR to begin the registration process immediately in order to avoid any delays in submitting applications. Applicants must have a DUNS number in order to register with the CCR. It typically takes 3-5 days to finalize CCR registration. To register online go to www.bpn.gov/CCR.

D. What is the Content and Form of the Application Submission?

1. Submitting in eGrants

CNCS requires that all applicants submit applications electronically via the CNCS web-based application system, [eGrants](#). Applications must arrive at CNCS by January 18, 2012 at 5 p.m. ET in order to be considered. CNCS reserves the right to extend the submission deadline. Any notice of such extended deadline will be posted in eGrants.

We recommend that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the application at least three weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a word processing document, then copy and paste the document into eGrants no later than 10 days before the deadline.

Contact the National Service Hotline at 800-942-2677 or <https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/ask> if a problem arises while creating an account, preparing, or submitting an application. Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the NOFO to which your organization is apply. National Service Hotline hours are 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET Monday through Friday.

If technical issues will prevent an applicant from submitting an application on time, please contact the National Service Hotline prior to the deadline to explain the technical issue and receive a ticket number. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, the applicant must continue working with the National Service Hotline to submit via eGrants.

2. Page Limits

In eGrants, applicants will enter text for

- Executive Summary: a brief paragraph, maximum of a half-page. Executive Summaries of all compliant applications will be published on the Corporation website following grant notifications.
- Program Design.
- Organizational Capability.
- Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy.

You may not exceed 16 double-spaced pages in the Narratives, including the Executive Summary and Cover Page, as the pages print out from eGrants. Reviewers will not consider material submitted over the page limit, even if eGrants allows you to enter and submit text over the limit. From the Review and Submit page, print out your application prior to final submission to ensure it is not over the 16 page limit. This limit does not include the budget and performance measures.

Do not submit supplementary materials such as videos, brochures, letters of support, or any other item not requested in these application instructions. CNCS will not review or return them.

3. Late Applications

CNCS may consider an application after the deadline, but only if the applicant submits a letter explaining the extenuating circumstance which caused the delay. The letter must be sent to LateApplications@cns.gov within the 24-hour period following the deadline. Late applications are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

If extenuating circumstances make the use of eGrants impossible, applicants may send a hard copy of the application to the address below in Section VII. Agency Contacts, via overnight carrier. Please use a non-U.S. Postal Service because of security-related delays in receiving mail from the U.S. Postal Service. All deadlines and requirements in this *Notice* apply to hard copy applications. Hard copy applications must include a cover letter detailing the circumstances that make it impossible to submit via e-Grants.

E. Coordination among State Commissions and Multi-state Applicants

CNCS expects State Commissions and multi-state applicants and grantees to consult and coordinate activities at the local level, as specified in Section 131. [42 U.S.C. 12583] of the National Community Service Act (NCSA). This consultation is designed to ensure the most effective use of national service resources and lead to enhanced coordination among grantees. The list of State Commissions can be found here:

<http://www.americorps.gov/about/contact/statecommission.asp>.

Multi-state planning applicants and grantees must:

- Consult with the State Commission of each state in which the organization plans to operate an AmeriCorps program **prior to application submission**.
- Provide the State Commission with their contact information **after grants are awarded**.
- Participate in the State Commission's annual needs assessment and training plan development activities, and in the development of its state service plan, as well as appropriate training and other events.
- Include the State Commission on the multi-state grantee's mailing list and invite the commission to appropriate training and other events.

State Commissions must:

- Consult in a timely manner with the multi-state applicants and grantees that contact them prior to application submission.
- Consider the schedules and needs of multi-state programs in their states when planning annual events and technical assistance activities.
- Include multi-state programs in their annual needs assessment and training plan development activities, and in the development of their state service plan.
- Add staff of multi-state programs in their state to their mailing list and invite them to appropriate training and other events.

CNCS will solicit State Commission input on multi-state applicants proposing to operate in their state. Participation by State Commissions is optional. This input will be provided via eGrants.

F. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due January 18, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

G. Funding Restrictions

Grants under this program are subject to the applicable Cost Principles under OMB Circulars A-21 (2 CFR part 220), A-122 (2 CFR part 230), or A-87 (2 CFR part 225) and the Uniform Administrative Requirements for grants under A-102 (45 CFR part 2541) or A-110 (45 CFR 2543 or 2 CFR part 21).

H. Equal Opportunity Survey. Applicants are asked to complete the Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants. Applicants may complete the survey in eGrants while preparing the application for submission or contact CNCS to obtain a hard copy.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. What are the Selection Criteria?

In evaluating applications for funding, staff reviewers will assess Program Design (50%), Organizational Capability (25%), and Cost-effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25%). Staff reviewers will assess application narratives against these criteria and weight them accordingly.

Section 2522.450 of the AmeriCorps regulations describes types of programs or program models that may receive special consideration in the selection process. Section 2522.455 describes how you can find out about additional priorities governing the selection process. Section 2522.470 describes other factors or information CNCS may consider in making final decisions.

B. What are the goals of the review and selection process?

The review and selection process is designed to:

- Give every eligible application full and fair consideration.
- Select a high-quality, well-balanced portfolio of grantees that will engage in a year of planning in order to apply for an AmeriCorps State and National grant in the following year.

The assessment of applications involves a wide range of factors and considerations. The review and selection process will produce a balanced set of high-quality programs that represent the priorities and selection factors described in this *Notice*.

Specifically, the review and selection process is designed to:

1. Identify eligible applications that satisfy the following considerations:

- High alignment with criteria.
- Priorities, in the order of preference outlined in Section I.B., above.
- **Additional Considerations:**
 - Recruitment and deployment of community volunteers to leverage impact.
 - State Commission rank and recommendations on single-state applicants.
 - State Commission input on multi-state applications.
 - Relative risk and opportunity.

2. Compile a balanced portfolio based on the following characteristics:

- Geographic representation.
- Equitable treatment of
 - Rural and urban communities.
 - Small and large programs.
 - Single and multi-state programs.
- Focus area representation.
- Strategic Characteristics:
 - Organizations that build capacity for individuals, nonprofits and communities to solve problems.
 - Organizations and/or program models that recruit and engage traditionally underrepresented populations in service and expand opportunities for both youth

and adults to serve; particularly for new Americans, low-income individuals, rural residents, older Americans, veterans, members of faith-based organizations, communities of color, Native Americans, and people with disabilities.

- Organizations that embrace innovative approaches to solving problems.

C. What are the stages in the review and selection process?

1. Compliance Review

CNCS staff will review all applications to determine compliance with eligibility, deadline, and completeness requirements. Applications that are submitted by eligible organizations, submitted by the deadline, and that are complete, will advance to Internal Review.

2. Internal Review

CNCS staff will assess Program Design; Organizational Capability; and Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy. Following staff assessment, some applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information. Clarification information is used by CNCS staff in making final recommendations. A request for clarification does not guarantee a grant award. Failure to respond to requests for information in a timely fashion will result in the removal of applications from consideration. CNCS staff will determine which applications to recommend for selection based on the results of Internal Review, and Clarification; and the priorities, balancing characteristics, additional considerations, and strategic characteristics listed above.

3. Selection

The Chief Executive Officer will select the final portfolio based on staff recommendation, and considering overall quality, priorities, balancing characteristics, additional considerations, and strategic characteristics listed above.

D. What feedback will applicants receive?

Following grant awards, each applicant will receive the results of the internal review pertaining to their application.

E. How long will the selection and review process take?

Processing and selecting applications for funding will require approximately three months.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. When will grants be awarded?

CNCS will award grants following the grant selection announcement. We anticipate announcing the results of this competition by mid-April, 2012.

B. What documents govern the grant?

The AmeriCorps regulations and grant provisions are incorporated in the Notice of Grant Award. The Notice of Grant Award incorporates the approved application as part of a binding commitment under the grant.

C. What is the project period for these grants?

The project period for these grants is up to one year. **The project start date may not occur prior to the date CNCS awards the grant**

D. What are the reporting requirements for these grants?

Grantees are required to provide annual performance and bi-annual financial reports. All grantees provide quarterly expense reports to the Payment Management System at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

If you receive an award, you will be required to report at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over \$25,000 and may be required to report on executive compensation for your organization. You must have the necessary systems in place to collect and report this information. See 2 C.F.R. Part 170 for more information and to determine how these requirements apply.

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

This *Notice* is available at www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp. The TTY number is 202–606-3472. For further information or for a printed copy of this *Notice*, call (202) 606-7508. For questions regarding multi-state or Indian Tribes applications to be submitted directly to CNCS, please call (202) 606-7508 or send an e-mail to americorpsgrants@cns.gov. State commissions should contact their CNCS program officers with questions. If you have questions concerning a single-state application, please contact the appropriate State Commission. A list of all State Commissions can be found here: <http://www.americorps.gov/about/contact/statecommission.asp>.

The mailing address is:

Corporation for National and Community Service
ATT: Office of Grants Policy and Operations/ASN Application
1201 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20525

VIII. OUTCOMES

Tier 1: Veterans and Military Families: Priority Outcomes
V1: Veterans receive CNCS-supported assistance
(new) V8: Veterans’ family members receive CNCS-supported assistance.
V7: Family members of active duty military receive CNCS-supported assistance.
(new) V9: Active duty military service members receive CNCS-supported assistance.
V2: Veterans engaged in service opportunities as National Service Participant or volunteer.
V10: Military family members engaged in service opportunities as a National Service Participant or volunteer.
Tier 3: Veterans and Military Families: Pilot Outcomes
V3: Veterans are assisted in pursuing educational opportunities
V4: Veterans are assisted in receiving professional certification, licensure, or credentials
V6: Housing units are developed, repaired, or otherwise made available for veterans

